

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Favorable reconsideration of the present application is respectfully requested.

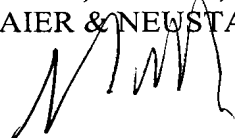
All of the claims were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102 as being anticipated by newly applied U.S. patent 5,415,280 (Balboni), or under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Balboni in view of Kubicek '046.

Applicants wish to thank Examiner Singh for the courtesy of an interview on November 20, 2008 at which time these rejections were discussed. In particular, Applicants pointed out that the claims recite a tray stocker and tray stocker drive device for reciprocally moving the tray stocker in the vertical direction to position the tray stocker to a number of predetermined positions. Applicants also explained that the reciprocal vertical positions recited in the claims provided utility in a tray component supply apparatus having replenishment or empty tray holding sections. Applicants pointed out that Balboni lacked reciprocal drive and that Kubicek was merely directed to an article transfer apparatus for vertically raising articles from one level to a higher level and also lacked reciprocal drive. It was agreed at the conclusion of the interview that the amended claims define over Balboni or Balboni in view of Kubicek.

Applicants therefore believe that the present application is in a condition for allowance and respectfully solicit an early Notice of Allowability.

Respectfully submitted,

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